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Dissatisfaction with lawmakers in Washington has been bubbling up for some time and finally Rich Wagner, Lincoln Club president and Chip Hanlon, a board member, decided to put their thoughts in writing and essentially issue an ultimatum to the people who each year benefit from between \$2 million and \$3 million from O.C. Republican donors.

The letter was posted Monday morning on <http://www.redcounty.com/> and is the subject of a piece by columnist Robert Novak.

"We're not convinced that the GOP leadership understands how unhappy rank and file Republicans are with their spending," said Hanlon, who has already personally stopped giving to all congressional candidates for this election cycle. "So we would like to see a strong statement showing that they do get it and they intend to change and return to what is supposed to be their roots of limited government."

Wagner, who said he and the club are continuing to donate to GOP lawmakers, said while their letter singles out the hot button issue of earmarks – individual projects funded based on member requests- the issue is larger than that.

"Our feeling was if they can't control the earmarks, how are they going to control the bigger stuff?" Wagner said.

The Lincoln Club wants all Republican members to agree to a one year moratorium on all earmark requests while they try and reform the system, Hanlon and Wagner said. And they ignore this request at their financial peril.

"Come November 5th, should the current GOP leadership in either house survive to lead in a new Congress, the Lincoln Club of Orange County will review its financial backing of all congressional Republicans, and we urge others to do likewise."

House Minority Leader John Boehner's spokesman bristled at the Club's letter. Kevin Smith said Boehner, R-Ohio, has never gotten an earmark for his district in his 17 years in the House and that he supports the kind of moratorium the Club is asking for.

"The House GOP economic agenda includes not only plans for an earmark freeze, but also proposals for serious entitlement reforms, unprecedented spending controls, and a revolutionary flat tax plan that has widespread conservative support." Smith said.

But Boehner is not expected to push his caucus into voting for such a freeze unless and until he believes such a measure would succeed.

Two Orange County House members agreed with the Lincoln Club's goals.

"America and the Republican Party have been ill served by the timid Republican leadership we've had to rely on," said Rep. Dana Rohrabacher. He said the current leadership has "got to go."

But Rohrabacher parted with the Lincoln Club over the earmark issue. While the Huntington Beach Republican seeks a limited number of earmarks each year, he believes the ones he gets funding for are worthwhile and that the problem with federal spending is a much larger one.

"The problem is not earmarks, which shows a bit of a naïveté on the part of the Lincoln Club," Rohrabacher said. "The problem is the overall level of spending and the specific areas of spending that should not be part of the federal government at all." Rohrabacher ticked off a number of programs he'd eliminate – and has fought to cut – including the National Endowment for the Arts, the Legal Services Corp., the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, subsidies for ethanol and research money associated with global warming.

**Rep. John Campbell**, who does not accept or request any earmarks, said he too agrees with the Lincoln Club.

"I think it is clear to most people, particularly Republican voters that in the last few years our party has not acted son what we have stood for," said Campbell, R-Irvine, who has made earmark reform his top priority in Congress. "People want to know how Republicans today are different from the Republicans they voted out of office two years ago and I don't think that our leadership has shown that we are different."

Typically lawmakers begin talking about their leadership after the November elections. Smith also pointed out in an e-mail that Boehner has only been the minority leader for two years and much of the specifics the Lincoln Club talks about occurred before Boehner took over.

Wagner said he doesn't expect an action by just the Orange County Lincoln Club to move the party. But just hours after the piece he and Hanlon wrote, he said, the Club began to get e-mails of support from all over the country.

The goal, he said, is for Republican donors from around the country to follow the Lincoln Club's lead.